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RELEASED IN PART
B6, B1, 1.4(D)

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	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0956
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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AMEMBASSY LIMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CARACAS 001888

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SUBJECT: WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN: A VENEZUELAN CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK,
ISSUE 7 (MAY 25-JUNE 8)

CLASSIFIED BY
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REASON:

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WELCOME TO OUR CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

1. (U) THIS IS THE SEVENTH IN A BIWEEKLY SERIES OF REPORTS ON

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 17 APR 2013
DATE/CASE ID: 16 JUL 2009 200503654

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VENEZUELA'S 1998 ELECTIONS. DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS--CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER, VIGNETTES, AND HIGH-FLYERS AND BOTTOM-FEEDERS--WE HOPE TO USE THIS NOTEBOOK TO BRING YOU BREAKING NEWS, RUMORS AND INSIDER GOSSIP, AND PROFILES OF THE MANY POLITICAL HANDLERS, CAMPAIGN WORKERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO WILL MAKE THIS ELECTION HAPPEN. THIS NOTEBOOK IS DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT OUR REGULAR POLITICAL REPORTING ON THE ELECTIONS, PROVIDING YOU A GLIMPSE OF THE "OFF CAMERA" POLITICS WHICH WILL NOT APPEAR ELSEWHERE.

CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER

-- (U) HENRIQUE SALAS ROMER CLEARED THE WAY FOR THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS SOCIALISM PARTY (MAS) TO SUPPORT HUGO CHAVEZ BY ANNOUNCING MAY 26 HE WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN MAS' INTERNAL PRIMARIES JUNE 9. IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERScore HIS INDEPENDENCE--HE AND CLAUDIO FERMIN ARE THE ONLY "INDEPENDENT" CANDIDATES WHO HAVE NOT ENTERED INTO ALLIANCE WITH ANOTHER PARTY--SALAS ROMER SAID "THOSE WHO WANT TO SUPPORT ME CAN DO SO, BUT I WILL NOT NEGOTIATE POWER OR PARTY LISTS
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WITH ANYONE." FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF CLAUDIO FERMIN, AND IRENE'S STILL FLAT POLLING FIGURES, SALAS ROMER HAD BECOME THE HOPE OF MASISTAS--LIKE TEODORO PETKOFF--WHO WERE LOOKING FOR AN ASCENDING CANDIDATE TO FEND OFF CHAVEZ.

-- (U) MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ WAS DECLARED APERTURA'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DURING A MAY 30 NATIONAL CONVENTION. RODRIGUEZ WON UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM APERTURA'S 152 REGIONAL, MUNICIPAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES, AFTER PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL HECTOR ALONSO LOPEZ WITHDREW HIMSELF FROM THE RUNNING. RODRIGUEZ, WHO WAS A PROTEGE OF CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ (CAP) AND ONE OF THE DESIGNERS OF THE ECONOMIC SHOCK PROGRAM WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO CAP'S DOWNFALL, SAID HE WOULD "ELIMINATE INFLATION THROUGH RESPONSIBLE FISCAL POLICY." CAP, UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN HIS APARTMENT IN THE PALOS GRANDES DISTRICT OF CARACAS, WAS ABSENT FROM THE GATHERING, BUT SENT A TAPE RECORDED MESSAGE. IN THE MESSAGE, CAP APPLAUDED THE SELECTION OF RODRIGUEZ AND SAID, "WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROTECT DEMOCRACY. THE THREAT OF DICTATORSHIP BY THE CHAVEZ CANDIDACY IS A FACT WHICH CANNOT BE HIDDEN. WE CANNOT BE AFRAID, BUT MUST STAND UP TO THIS THREAT."

-- (U) QUERER A LA CIUDAD (TO LOVE THE CITY), A POLITICAL MOVEMENT BUILT AROUND BETTERING CARACAS AND ITS ENVIRONS, ANNOUNCED JUNE 2 ITS SUPPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CLAUDIO FERMIN. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT CAME ONLY DAYS AFTER QUERER A LA CIUDAD PRESIDENT

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GARCIA DECLARED THAT THE ORGANIZATION WAS "TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITY OF NOT SUPPORTING FERMIN." QUERER A LA CIUDAD POLITICAL DIRECTOR LUIS LEON SAID GARCIA WAS SPEAKING "ONLY IN HIS PERSONAL CAPACITY," AND NOT AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF QUERER A LA CIUDAD. LEON SAID THE ORGANIZATION'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOULD KEEP AN EYE ON GARCIA AND HIS TENDENCY TO ATTACK PERSISTENTLY

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FERMIN.

-- (U) IRENE'S ALLIANCE WITH COPEI CONTINUES TO PROVOKE PROBLEMS FOR COPEI AND THE RADICAL CAUSE PARTY (LCR) IN REGIONAL ELECTIONS. IN THE STATE OF BOLIVAR, COPEYANOS CONCERNED ABOUT LOW SUPPORT FOR COPEI GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE LUIS AGUILAR AND EVEN LOWER SUPPORT FOR LCR CANDIDATE JORGE ROIG, SENT A DELEGATION TO MEET WITH COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL DONALD RAMIREZ. THE DELEGATION REQUESTED PERMISSION FOR COPEI-BOLIVAR TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (AD) CANDIDATE AND CURRENT GOVERNOR JORGE CARVAJAL. CARVAJAL REACHED OUT TO COPEYANOS IN BOLIVAR STATE DURING THE 1997 PARTIAL REVOTE, WHICH HE WON AGAINST A LCR CANDIDATE, AND HAS INCLUDED SEVERAL IMPORTANT COPEI STATE LEADERS IN HIS GOVERNMENT. THESE POLITICIANS, CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN SURVIVAL, ARE LOATH TO TAKE ON CARVAJAL, WHO IS VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED RE-ELECTION. RAMIREZ REJECTED THE REQUEST, SAYING, "WE HAVE TO REMAKE THE PARTY IN BOLIVAR, AND IF SOME COPEYANOS WANT TO STY IN STATE GOVERNMENT, WELL, LET THEM SIGN ON TO THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY."

-- (U) VENEZUELA'S BISHOPS WILL DECIDE WHAT THE CHURCH'S ROLE SHOULD BE IN THE ELECTIONS DURING A JULY EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, MONSIGNOR BALTAZAR PORRAS TOLD THE PRESS MAY 25. PORRAS, WHO IS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (CEV), LAMENTED THE RHETORIC OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, SAYING, "WE

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0957
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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NEED THE CANDIDATES TO TALK ABOUT NEW IDEAS THAT WILL PERMIT THE
RENOVATION OF DEMOCRACY. RIGHT NOW WE ARE PASSING THROUGH A
DIFFICULT PROCESS BECAUSE WE LACK POLITICAL WILL. BUT IT IS
IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THERE EXISTS A CONSENSUS WHICH WILL FORCE
THOSE WHO SEEK POWER TO PRODUCE REFORMS."

VIGNETTES

CHAVEZ AND PEREZ JIMENEZ

2. (U) CHAVEZ MET WITH FORMER VENEZUELAN MILITARY STRONGMAN MARCOS
PEREZ JIMENEZ DURING A SHORT STOP IN MADRID. CHAVEZ SAID HE HAD
BEEN SEEKING A MEETING WITH PEREZ JIMENEZ FOR "MANY YEARS," AND
DECIDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS VISIT TO EUROPE TO STOP IN SPAIN
AND PRESENT TO PEREZ JIMENEZ A "DECORATION AUTHORIZED BY THE PEOPLE
OF THE TOWN OF MICHELENA," WHERE THE DICTATOR WAS BORN.

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3. (U) CHAVEZ DESCRIBED HIS DECISION TO MEET WITH THE DICTATOR WHO SOUGHT TO STRANGLE VENEZUELA'S NASCENT DEMOCRACY IN ITS CRIB AS EXPRESSING THE "DESIRE OF MANY VENEZUELAN'S" TO ACKNOWLEDGE "THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE BAD MEMORIES OF GENERAL PEREZ JIMENEZ." CHAVEZ CLAIMED THAT THE DICTATORSHIP OF PEREZ JIMENEZ "STANDS TALL COMPARED TO OUR DEMOCRACY." CHAVEZ NOTED THAT HE AND PEREZ JIMENEZ SPOKE OF THE FUTURE, AND THAT CHAVEZ "LISTENED TO HIS IDEAS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT, WHICH ARE STILL RELEVANT AND COINCIDE WITH THE

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NECESSITIES THAT WE HAVE RECOGNIZED RECENTLY AND WHICH FORM PART OF OUR PROJECT TO CREATE THE FIFTH REPUBLIC."

4. (U) IN THIS REGARD, CHAVEZ SAID THERE WOULD BE NO PRIVATIZATION OF THE ALUMINUM COMPLEX. HE NOTED, "I HAVE SAID TO THE ENTIRE WORLD THAT THERE EXISTS THE FALSE IDEA THAT THE ONLY SALVATION FOR THE ALUMINUM COMPLEX IS TO SELL IT, BUT I BELIEVE THAT ONE CAN CREATE A GREAT MIXED COMPANY WITH THIS RESOURCE, WHICH, ALONG WITH A NEW VENEZUELAN STATE, WILL BECOME ONE OF THE NEW LINES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE."

READING THE FINE PRINT

5. (U) AD'S CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEN) REVISED INTERNAL ELECTORAL REGULATIONS TO PERMIT SELECTION OF AD'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE THROUGH CONSULTATION OF THE PARTY'S SECTORS AND REGIONS, AND NOT THROUGH A DIRECT INTRA-PARTY PRIMARY. THE DECISION WAS EXPECTED AND CLEARED THE WAY FOR ACCLAMATION OF SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ALFARO AS AD'S CANDIDATE IN THE DECEMBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THE REVISION ALSO GIVES TO THE CEN AUTHORITY TO CHOOSE WHO AD WILL STAND AS CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES. ARTICLE 185 OF AD'S ELECTORAL REGULATIONS HAD CALLED FOR "DIRECT CONSULTATION OF PARTY GRASSROOTS UNITS" TO SELECT CANDIDATES. THIS ARTICLE WAS REVISED THROUGH A "REINTERPRETATION" WHICH ALLOWS FOR "DIRECT CONSULTATION" TO TAKE PLACE INDIRECTLY THROUGH PARTY LEADERSHIP COUNCILS, SUCH AS METROPOLITAN, STATE, AND NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

6. (U) THIS MUCH EXPECTED REVISION RECEIVED A LOT OF PRESS PLAY, SINCE IT WAS A NECESSARY ANTECEDENT TO THE PARTY'S SELECTION OF ALFARO AS ITS CANDIDATE. HOWEVER, THE CEN MADE SEVERAL OTHER

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DECISIONS WHICH WERE EQUALLY IMPORTANT AND SHED SOME LIGHT ON WHAT

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MIGHT HAPPEN DURING THE CAMPAIGN. FOR INSTANCE, THE CEN ADAPTED ARTICLE 13 TO GIVE THE CEN AUTHORITY TO FIX THE NUMBER OF INDEPENDENTS OR MEMBERS OF OTHER PARTIES WHO COULD BE INCLUDED ON AD PARTY LISTS AS THE RESULT OF POLITICAL ALLIANCES. IN OTHER WORDS, THE CEN LEFT THE DOOR OPEN TO SUCH ALLIANCES. ALSO, THE CEN DETERMINED THAT PARTY REGULATIONS GOVERNING RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC OFFICE CAN BE SUSPENDED FOR "REASONS OF PARTY INTEREST." SOME OF AD'S MOST EXPERIENCED LEGISLATORS ARE UP AGAINST MANDATORY RETIREMENT--SUCH AS CONGRESSIONAL FLOOR LEADER HENRY RAMOS ALLUP, PARTY PRESIDENT CARLOS CANACHE MATA, CTV LEADER FEDERICO RAMIREZ LEON, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL ARISTIDES HOSPEDALES, AND DEPUTY CARMELO LAURIA--AND THE CEN NEEDED A MEANS TO KEEP THESE POLITICIANS ON BOARD DURING A TOUGH CAMPAIGN AND AN EVEN TOUGHER YEAR UNDER A NEW GOVERNMENT.

REACHING OUT TO CARAQUENOS

7. (U) POLITICAL MARKETEERS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE CITIZENS OF CARACAS WOULD HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF A RECENT POLL CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL CULTURAL COUNCIL (CONAC). CONCERNED ABOUT ITS OWN ABILITY TO PROMOTE CULTURE IN VENEZUELA'S LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREA, CONAC COMMISSIONED THE POLL,

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	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/023W				

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ENTITLED, "INDUSTRIES OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL CONSUMPTION IN THE CARACAS METROPOLITAN AREA." THE POLL SHOWS THAT THE BEST PLACE TO FIND CARAQUENOS IS ON THE STREETS, IN SHOPPING CENTERS, OR AT CHURCH. THE BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE IS THROUGH TELEVISION AND RADIO. THE WORST PLACE TO COMMUNICATE WITH CARAQUENOS IS IN "HIGH CULTURE" EVENTS OR PLACES SUCH AS LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS, OR THE THEATER.

THE THREE POLL RESULTS ARE:

1. FREQUENCY OF CONSUMPTION OF EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE

ACTIVITY	DAILY	ALMOST NEVER	WEEKENDS	NEVER
VISITING	15	14	53	18
EATING OUT	3	5	37	54
MOVIES	0	2	39	57
GYM/JOGGING	9	8	13	70
SHOPPING	6	13	53	27
SPORTING EVENTS	2	4	37	57
PLAY POOL	1	2	22	74
PLAY VIDEO GAMES	0	1	13	85
GO TO CHURCH	1	3	49	46

2. FREQUENCY OF CONSUMPTION OF EVENTS INSIDE THE HOUSE

ACTIVITY	DAILY	ALMOST NEVER	WEEKENDS	NEVER
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WATCH TV	76		16	5	3
LISTEN TO RADIO	71		21	3	5
READ NEWSPAPERS	49		22	18	11
READ MAGAZINES	17		20	30	32
LISTEN TO MUSIC	65		18	9	7
WATCH VIDEOS	6		6	48	39
USE COMPUTOR	15		10	4	71
PLAY VIDEO GAMES	3		2	14	80

3. FREQUENCY OF CONSUMPTION OF ELITE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
VISIT LIBRARIES	8	5	26	61
VISIT BOOKSTORES	5	7	41	46
VISIT MUSEUMS	3	6	33	57
TRAVEL	0	2	23	74
ATTEND CONFERENCES	1	3	16	79
GO TO THEATER	1	4	26	68

HIGH FLYERS AND BOTTOM-FEEDERS

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